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TimeLines

Newsletter of the Concordia History Department

New Faculty Hiring

The History Department is delighted to welcome four new faculty members. Erica Lehrer, our specialist in Genocide and Human Rights studies, was profiled in our previous issue. The three other new hires will not only complement our strengths in both Cultural History and the History of Genocide and Human Rights but also allow the department to play a leading role in creating a university programme in Law and Society.

Matthew Penney completed his B.A. (Honours) at Memorial University of Newfoundland and recently completed his Ph.D. at the University of Auckland in New Zealand. His dissertation, entitled "Victims and Victimizers – Representations of War in Japanese Popular Culture," is concerned with Japanese historical memory and popular attempts to deal with war crimes and aggression from the 1950s to the present day. Dr. Penney is the author of a number of articles, including "Rising Sun, Iron Cross – Military Germany in Japanese Popular Culture," *Japanstudien*, Vol. 17 (2005); and "Far From Oblivion – The Nanking Massacre in Japanese Historical Writing for Children and Young Adults," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* (forthcoming).

Eric Reiter completed his Ph.D. in medieval history at the University of Toronto and his

LL.M. at McGill University. He is the author (with Justice Louise Otis) of "Front-Line Justice," *Virginia Journal of International Law*, Vol. 46 (2006); "Mediation by Judges: A New Phenomenon in the Transformation of Justice," *Pepperdine Dispute Resolution Law Journal*, Vol. 6 (2006); and "Imported Books, Imported Ideas: Reading European Jurisprudence in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Quebec," *Law and History Review*, Vol. 22 (2004).

Anya Zilberstein completed her B.A. (summa cum laude) at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; and her M.A. at MIT. She is presently completing her Ph.D. at MIT. Her dissertation, entitled "Planting Improvement: Small Farms and Scientific Agriculture in the British North Atlantic, 1740-1820," examines the environmental and cultural history of agriculture in eighteenth century northern North America in the context of emerging imperial networks of natural historians and agricultural improvers and the trans-Atlantic circulation of texts, experiments, and organic materials among them. Her article, "Objects of Distant Exchange: The Northwest Coast, New England, and the Global Imagination," won the MIT Siegel Prize and is currently under review by *The William and Mary Quarterly*.

History Students in the Spotlight

Graduate Students Putting Concordia's Public History Program on the Map

Project 55: A Historical Audio Tour of Ethnic Communities on Saint-Laurent Boulevard According to Bus 55, a public history project by Concordia graduate students Nancy Rebelo and Jasmine Saint-Laurent, was the subject of a recent article in the *Bulletin of the Canadian Historical Association*. [See Volume 33.1]

The 36-minute MP3 was originally conceived of in Prof. Steven High's seminar on "Working-Class Public History." As Rebelo and Saint-Laurent outline in their article, *Project 55* examines the life experiences of immigrants who settled on Montreal's Saint-Laurent Boulevard, and focuses on subjects drawn from the Chinese, Portuguese, Jewish, and

Italian communities. Clips from the testimonies of the immigrants are joined together by the reminiscences of Michel Ferland, a bus driver who has worked this route since the early 1990s.

The project is accessible to a number of audiences. It features both an accompanying pamphlet and booklet. While the pamphlet provides a synopsis of each interviewee's story as well as a number of photographs, more in-depth material, including a high school lesson plan, is found in the booklet.

A copy of the MP3 can be downloaded from the Public History website. [<http://storytelling.concordia.ca/workingclass>]



Work of Oral History Students Profiled in the *Concordia Journal*

Two students working with the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling have had their work featured in a recent issue of the *Concordia Journal* [see April 5, 2007 issue]. At an event on March 23rd, David Sworn and Marie Pelletier both made oral presentations concerning research they had conducted under the Centre's auspices, and their innovative projects apparently caught the attention of *Journal* staff.

Sworn interviewed residents of St. Henri concerning their childhoods. The material allowed him to reconstruct life in the neighbourhood in a new way, and to get a sense of the importance of place in the lives of his sources.

Pelletier turned her attention to the stories of Montreal's homeless by interviewing residents of the city's shelters over the past couple of years. Her work breaks new ground because homelessness has not been a subject of much historical research, and it gives a voice to some of society's most marginalized members.

The quality and imaginativeness of these projects is yet another testimony to the leading role that Concordia's History Department and the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling are playing in shaping how history will be conceived of and disseminated in the 21st century.



History Students cont'd.

Department Well Represented at Undergraduate Research Day

On Friday March 23, 2007 the Faculty of Arts and Science held its first Undergraduate Research Day. The inaugural event saw 73 undergraduate students present their research to the larger university community. The day began with a poster session in the Atrium of the Library Building, which was followed by a series of oral presentations in the De Seve Theatre. A number of History students participated

in the day's event, and they did us all proud by demonstrating the innovative nature of undergraduate research in History at Concordia.

Special congratulations should be given to Silvia Mihutescu who won first prize for her poster, and Anastasia Jones who received a second prize for her oral presentation in the humanities section.



Pictured left to right: Lee Mellor, Silvia Mihutescu, Colin North, Daniel Quinn, Jacob Larsen

Another Successful HIM Conference

On March 2, 2007, a fierce storm hit Montreal and the surrounding areas. Massive snowfalls, gusting winds, and bitter cold ravaged our fine city, threatening to bury the graduate student conference that had been planned for the following day. The organizers of the 12th annual *History in the Making Conference* anxiously awaited possible word that their months of careful planning would come to nought. Fortunately, Concordia University's history students awoke on May 3rd to a sunny – albeit still snowy – beautiful day. Mother Nature managed to prevent only three presenters from attending the event, and the conference proved to be as successful as its predecessors.

"Sacred and Secular Systems of Belief: Myth, Religion and Identity in Politics and History" was a product of the hard work of a dozen graduate students in Concordia University's history department. As the lengthy title suggests, this year's theme was a broad one, encompassing a diverse range of topics related to 'belief in history.' The organizers were quickly made aware of the ambiguity and facile misinterpretation of their chosen theme. However, 'belief in history' was not an attempt to force history students to question whether they actually believed in history (an exercise that would perhaps see an increase in drop-out rates); rather, it brought forth studies of underlying ideologies and worldviews as driving forces of the past. And, as the conference

day progressed, the theme proved a fruitful one, gathering graduate students from across Canada and the United States to partake in a discussion on such topics as fascism as religion in children's textbooks, Canada and cultural crises, and the fabrication of history as a political tool.

Dr. Noel Salmond opened the conference with a discussion of environmentalism as pseudo-religion, and thus infused the conference with a contemporary topic that is increasingly prevalent in modern society. And Dr. Robert Abzug, our closing speaker, presented his new research that sought to destabilize the categories of religious identity. In an age that has witnessed the secularization of both the state and the individual in official rhetoric, the ongoing – and multifarious – systems of belief that make up individual cultural identities necessitate a rethinking of the religious language we use to define ourselves.

The success of the conference rested on the quality of the presentations and the enthusiastic participation of all those present. "Sacred and Secular Systems of Belief" also continued the tradition of displaying the hard work of Concordia's graduate students of history and the continuing support of the faculty for new research and graduate work.

- Suki Wellman



Theses and Original Research Essays

M.A. Original Essays

Sarah Steinbock-Pratt, *The Moral of the Story: Harry S. Truman's Public Use of History*, Fall 2006 (Supervisor: Graham Carr).

Jasmine St-Laurent, *Investigating the Ministry of Love: Public Memory, History Instruction, Culture Wars and the Media in the United States and Quebec (1990-2006)*, Spring 2007 (Supervisor: Mary Vipond).

Kevin Wilson, *Red Menace, Brown Plague: Violent Propaganda and the Politics of the Street in the Downfall of Weimar*, Spring 2007 (Supervisor: Rosemarie Schade).



M.A. Theses

Lauren Burger, *Striving for Integrated Commemoration: The Presentation of the Holocaust and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin*, Fall 2006 (Supervisor: Frank Chalk).

This thesis investigates Holocaust commemoration at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin, Germany. Completed in *Mitte* in May 2005, the *Mahnmal* has come to be understood as Germany's central Holocaust Memorial. It is, however, dedicated exclusively to the Jewish victims of Nazi crimes. During the Memorial's 17 year-long genesis, many criticized those responsible for the project for institutionalizing a hierarchy of victims of Nationalism Socialism. Discontent about how a new memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe would *centralize* a diverse landscape of memory – both physically, by eclipsing numerous memorial institutions and historical sites in Germany, and interpretively, by establishing that the Nazi persecution of Jews overshadows that of other victim groups – fuelled the long debate over the *Mahnmal*.

Pointing to aspects of the *Mahnmal*'s history, its current tourist literature, the presentation at its attached Information Centre and the programme of its governing body, this study counters such criticism. I contend that the *Mahnmal* is a site where a determined attempt to *integrate* the memorialization of European Jews murdered during the Holocaust – into the landscape of the capital, into the network of historical and memorial sites pertaining to National Socialism and the Third Reich, and into other histories of suffering during that period – emerged as a predominant theme, and a clear goal of the memorial-Makers. The project, I demonstrate, engenders such integrated commemoration, and fosters dynamic opportunities for ongoing commemoration in Germany.

Marc Drouin, *To the Last Seed: Atrocity Crimes and the Genocidal Continuum in Guatemala, 1979-1984*, Fall 2006 (Supervisor: Frank Chalk).

Approximately 132,000 people were killed in Guatemala between 1978 and 1984 in an armed conflict which displaced as much as 20 percent of the country's total population.

Of the 626 massacres documented by the Guatemalan Truth Commission and imputed to government security forces, 415 were committed in an 18-month period between June 1981 and December 1982. Based on over one hundred first-person accounts of twenty-one massacres perpetrated during that time, as well as reports from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights concerning violations to the American Convention on Human Rights in Guatemala, this study analyses and contextualises what David Scheffer has termed *atrocity crimes*. Referring to international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions and the United Nations Genocide Convention, and the growing jurisprudence emanating from the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, crimes committed in Guatemala have been placed on what scholars have called a *genocide continuum*. Tracing the evolution of consecutive military campaigns from 1981 to 1983, which deliberately made no distinction between armed insurgents and civilian non-combatants, this study demonstrates how war crimes and crimes against humanity in Guatemala in the late 1970s evolved into full-blown genocide by 1982, decimating an entire generation of non-Indigenous urban professionals and intellectuals, as well as entire Indigenous populations in the Guatemalan highlands. Relying on Indigenous survivor's accounts, this thesis attempts to shed light on a genocide which, in Samuel Totten's words, the twentieth century chose to ignore.

Catherine Dufresne, *The First Indochina War and the Failure of the European Defense Community 1950-1954*, Spring 2007 (Supervisor: Frank Chalk).

Previous scholarly works pointed to the connection between the failure of the European Defence Community and the Indochina conflict, but no one has analyzed the development of this link. What were the repercussions of the Indochina-EDC link on the policies of the three French Foreign Ministers who succeeded each other between 1950 and 1954? How did international and national events influence the French Foreign Ministry in its dealings with the Indochina-EDC link? Based on evidence from the unpublished diplomatic archives of the

M.A. Theses cont'd.

Quai d'Orsay, this thesis sheds new light on the significance of the Indochina-EDC link.

Foreign Ministers Robert Schuman, Georges Bidault and Pierre Mendès-France had to deal with the EDC and the Indochina questions under severe international and national constraints arising from economic problems, political instability in Paris and Cold War tensions. Foreign Minister Schuman used the EDC-Indochina link to advance France's policies. The lack of progress on the EDC proposal and French setbacks in Indochina undermined the efforts of his successor, Georges Bidault. Mendès-France, Bidault's successor, had to promise to find quick solutions to both problems. This paper explains how the EDC first served France's imperial policy, but turned into a political liability that finally led to the dramatic end of France's involvement in the Indochina conflict and to the rejection of the EDC proposal by France, guaranteeing the fall of the Fourth Republic and precipitating the end of Franco-American cooperation.

Stephanie D. Jowett, *Welcome to Psychedelphia: Identity and Community in the Haight-Ashbury District of San Francisco, 1965-1966*, Fall 2006 (Supervisor: Graham Carr).

From early 1965 until the autumn of 1967 the Haight-Ashbury community of San Francisco underwent a period of rapid change as it became an icon of the larger counterculture movement in the 1960s.

Early psychedelic "happenings" helped to create and consolidate a non-conformist identity for the district and its inhabitants, as the area was transformed into a liberated zone of countercultural carnival. Attracted by the vivid visual style and exotic nature of the new culture, the mass-media and commercial interests helped to construct a standardized and stereotypical image of "the hippie" that then drew tens of thousands of tourists, teenyboppers, and "plastic hippies" to the Haight. These newcomers came to sample the commodified lifestyle elements of the Haight-Ashbury experience, often mimicking patterns of consumption deeply internalized by American society as a whole.

This thesis examines the creation of community identity in the Haight-Ashbury district, and the subsequent transmission, standardization, and consumption of that identity.

Samantha A. Kravitz, *The Business of Selling the Soviet Union: Intourist and the Wooing of American Travelers, 1929-1939*, Fall 2006 (Supervisor: Alison Rowley).

Created by the Soviet government in 1929, the all-union, joint stock company, Intourist (Foreign Tourist) was created to facilitate tourist travel to a land in transition. It was designed as a modern, full-service travel agency offering inclusive and individual tours to the Soviet Union, while at the same time selling a vision of the Soviet state to foreigners. The USSR was a country of the future, a "Land of Color and Progress" (according to one 1939 Intourist advertisement) and this was especially appealing to Americans during the tumultuous 1930s.

This work explores the dynamics behind how Intourist sold the Soviet Union as a travel destination to Americans in the interwar years (specifically 1929-1939). It highlights the political and economic power of tourism using traditional primary source documents in combination with visual and material history items, specifically Intourist ephemera. It also brings to the forefront the intricate and fruitful relationships between the Soviets and American advertisers, the mass media, banks, law firms and major names in the tourism industry. Intourist could not have survived, let alone succeeded, without support.

American tourism to the Soviet Union influenced opinion on multiple levels of society and government during the 1930s. Intourist helped the Soviets garner legitimacy on the world stage and reshaped the American public's image of the USSR, thus furthering Soviet policy objectives.

Jocelyn Parr, *Music as Monument: Rock Nacional and Memory in Post-Dictatorship Argentina*, Fall 2006 (Supervisor: Nora Jaffary).

Military dictatorship was a too common feature of Argentine politics for much of the twentieth century. The most recent





M.A. Theses cont'd.

dictatorship (1976-1983) led by General Videla saw the disappearance of an estimated 30,000 Argentines. In the preceding decade, Argentina had been crippled by a civil war that raged between violent, Cuba-inspired guerrillas and the military.

It was in this violent context that Argentine rock music, the best of which was called *rock nacional*, appeared. Inspired by international rockers like The Beatles and by international student politics such as was seen in Paris in 1968, Argentina's first rockers were at once eager participants in an international rock scene and strident resisters to local violence. From 1965 to 1983, *rock nacional* went from being a subculture to mass culture. Imprinted in its history and in its most popular hits of that period are references to the violence that pervaded Argentine culture.

When dictatorship ended in 1983, Argentines turned to its atrophied judicial system to address the war crimes perpetrated in the previous seven years. However, with the military still a powerful force, 1980s governments bowed to military pressure and legislated impunity laws that destroyed any hopes of judicial retribution. Over a decade after the end of military rule, Argentines in the 1990s sought new means of atonement in commemoration.

With anniversaries of the coup coinciding with anniversaries of the first recordings of rock music, and the original *rockeros* like Charly García and León Gieco still garnering mass audiences, human rights organizations like *Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo* and Argentine governments turned to *rockeros* to animate memory of the dictatorship era. The symbiosis developed between *rockeros*, *Las Madres* and Argentine politicians has enabled a commemoration of the Dirty War which recalls only those who suffered at the hands of the military. Ignored in this commemoration are the systemic causes which led to the coup in the first place, guerrilla terrorism, and the uncomfortable fact that many Argentines

benefited from the Dirty War era. This study of *rock nacional* and memory of dictatorship highlights the partisan selections that are being made and illustrates the problems with current commemorative projects in Argentina.

Richard Pilkington, *A "Time when Principles Make Best Politics"? The United States' Response to the Genocide in East Pakistan*, Fall 2006 (Supervisor: Frank Chalk).

On 25 March 1971, fearing the secession of East Pakistan, the military dictator, President Yahya Khan unleashed his country's West-Pakistani-dominated armed forces in a brutal campaign of massacre and repression in the East. During nine months of operations, the army butchered at least one million people. Though very much aware of the nature of the atrocities in East Pakistan, and despite vociferous public criticism at home, the US Government not only refused to intervene militarily and economically, but also failed to publicly condemn the actions of the Islamabad authorities.

President Richard Nixon and his National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, dominated the formulation of US foreign policy at the time of the crisis. In his memoirs, Kissinger argued that US inaction throughout the emergency was justified on the grounds that Yahya was acting as the main channel for secret communications in a major strategic initiative aimed at securing rapprochement between the US and China. In the absence of much important primary-source material, secondary works have perpetuated this view.

In contrast, using evidence from recently declassified documents, this thesis argues that the initial US reaction was divided into two phases. Only after 27 April 1971, when it sprang fully into life, did the secret China initiative come to dominate Nixon and Kissinger's policy. Up until this watershed event, however, a complex mixture of more mundane motives drove the US response. This revisionist posture, therefore, directly contradicts Kissinger's contention.

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Department Award Winners

We are pleased to announce the 2006-2007 Department Award winners:

~~The William Henry Atherton Prize~~
~~(best undergraduate essay in Canadian history)~~
~~[REDACTED]~~

The David Fox Memorial Prize
(best undergraduate honours essay in History)
David Sworn

The O'Connor/O'Hearn Prize
(academic excellence and contributions to university life)
Eugene Miakinkov

Dagobert Broh Ph.D. Entrance Fellowship
Scott Selders

Dagobert Broh Graduate Research Stipend
Simon Jolivet

Arts and Science Doctoral Fellowship
Ariane Mathieu
Antoine Guillemette

Arts and Science M.A. Fellowship
Mark Beauchamp
William Hamilton

Concordia Fellowship
Ariane Mathieu

McConnell Fellowship
Antoine Guillemette

SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholarship
Marie-Ève Chagnon

SSHRC Master's Scholarship
Michael Hargadon

Doctoral Tuition Fee Remission
Ariane Mathieu
Antoine Guillemette

International Fee Remission
Scott Selders